

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1-46. (canceled)

47. (currently amended) A thermoforming process for preparing a thermally crystalline polyester food tray exhibiting dimensional stability at elevated temperatures, the process comprising:

(i) preparing a polymeric composition comprising an alkylene terephthalate or naphthalate bulk polymer; from about 4 to about 15 wt% based on the total weight of the polymeric composition of an additive comprising a substantially amorphous co-polymer of ethylene and an acrylate; and from about 0.1 to about 4 wt% based on the total weight of the polymeric composition of a compatibilizer/emulsifier/surfactant (CES) comprising a grafted or backbone co-polymer or ter-polymer of ethylene and a glycidyl acrylate or maleic anhydride, and optionally an acrylate selected from the group consisting of methacrylate, ethylacrylate, propylacrylate, butylacrylate, ethylhexylacrylate, and mixtures thereof;

(ii) extruding said polymeric composition through an extrusion die to form a thermoformable extrudate in a substantially non-oriented state;

(iii) contacting the extrudate with a shaping surface to thermoform the extrudate into at least one food tray; and

(iv) separating and recovering the at least one food tray.

48. (previously presented) The process of claim 47 wherein said bulk polymer is selected from the group consisting of PET, PEN, PETG, PCT, PCTA, PBT, PTT, and mixtures thereof.

49. (previously presented) The process of claim 47 wherein said additive is selected from the group consisting of ethylene/methylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/butylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/ethylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/ethylhexylacrylate co-polymer, and mixtures thereof, and optionally contains a core-shell toughener.

50. (previously presented) The process of claim 47 wherein said CES is selected from the group consisting of ethylene/glycidyl methylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride co-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methacrylate/methacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methylacrylate/ethylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methacrylate/butylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methacrylate/ethylhexylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/methacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/ethylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/ butylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/ ethylhexylacrylate ter-polymer, and mixtures thereof.

51. (previously presented) The process of claim 47 wherein said food tray at a thickness of about 15 to 25 mils has a Dynatup Impact toughness rating at 70°F (21°C) of at least 125 and Dynatup Impact toughness rating at -20°F (-29°C) of at least 120.

52. (previously presented) The process of claim 51 wherein said Dynatup rating at -20°F (-29°C) is at least 140.

53. (previously presented) The process of claim 52 wherein said Dynatup rating at -20°F (-29°C) is at least 150.

54. (currently amended) The process of claim 47 wherein said bulk polymer is heat set and, following heat setting, has a final intrinsic viscosity that is at least about 70% of the initial intrinsic viscosity of said bulk polymer.

55. (previously presented) The process of claim 54 wherein said final intrinsic viscosity is at least about 75% of said initial intrinsic viscosity.

56. (previously presented) The process of claim 55 wherein said final intrinsic viscosity is at least about 80% of said initial intrinsic viscosity.

57. (previously presented) The process of claim 56 wherein said final intrinsic viscosity is at least about 85% of said initial intrinsic viscosity.

58. (previously presented) The process of claim 47 further comprising a step of combining the trimmed and removed portions of the extrudate with virgin materials of step (i).

59-73. (canceled)

74. (new) A thermoforming process for preparing a dimensionally stable, thermally crystalline polyester article, the process comprising:

(i) preparing a polymeric composition comprising polyethylene terephthalate having an intrinsic viscosity of less than 0.95; from about 4 to about 40 wt% based on the total weight of the polymeric composition of an additive comprising a substantially amorphous co-polymer of ethylene and an acrylate; and from about 0.1 to about 8 wt% based on the total weight of the polymeric composition of a compatibilizer/emulsifier/surfactant (CES) comprising a grafted or backbone co-polymer or ter-polymer of ethylene and a glycidyl acrylate or maleic anhydride, and optionally an acrylate selected from the group consisting of methacrylate, ethylacrylate, propylacrylate, butylacrylate, ethylhexylacrylate, and mixtures thereof;

(ii) extruding said polymeric composition through an extrusion die to form a thermoformable extrudate in a substantially non-oriented state;

(iii) contacting the extrudate with a shaping surface at a temperature and for a time sufficient to thermoform the extrudate into a dimensionally stable article; and

(iv) separating and recovering the article.

75. (new) The process of claim 74 wherein said intrinsic viscosity is less than about 0.9.

76. (new) The process of claim 75 wherein said intrinsic viscosity is less than about 0.85.

77. (new) The process of claim 76 wherein said initial intrinsic viscosity is less than about 0.8.

78. (new) The process of claim 74 wherein said additive is selected from the group consisting of ethylene/methylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/butylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/ethylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/ethylhexylacrylate co-polymer, and mixtures thereof, and optionally contains a core-shell toughener.

79. (new) The process of claim 74 wherein said CES is selected from the group consisting of ethylene/glycidyl methylacrylate co-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride co-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methacrylate/methacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methylacrylate/ethylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methacrylate/butylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/glycidyl methacrylate/ethylhexylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/methacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/ethylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/butylacrylate ter-polymer, ethylene/maleic anhydride/ethylhexylacrylate ter-polymer, and mixtures thereof.

80. (new) The process of claim 74 further comprising a step of combining the trimmed and removed portions of the extrudate with virgin materials of step (i).